Claims

[c1]   1. A method of organizing and displaying a plurality of hyperlink addresses associated with a plurality of corresponding web site pages on a portal page comprising the steps of:

providing a visual representation of a map having a plurality of active areas thereon, said active areas representing individual hyperlinks or a plurality of hyperlinks having a common theme; and
modifying said map to provide information regarding said common theme when a cursor is placed over one of said active areas.

[c2]   2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

grouping said active areas such that active areas related by a common concept are placed on said map in close proximity to each other

[c3]   3. The method of claim 1 wherein said active areas are shown as representations of buildings on said map.

[c4]   4. The method of claim 3 further comprising the steps of :

displaying the interior of a building when said active area represented by said building is selected; and
displaying said plurality of hyperlinks having a common theme on the interior of said building.

[c5]   5. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

displaying a button which, when selected by a user, will re-display said map, without regard to where said user has navigated.

[c6]   6. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

displaying a navigation bar having a plurality of buttons corresponding to said plurality of active areas on said map.

[c7]   7. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

temporarily displaying static images at random locations on said map.

[c8]
        8. The method of claim 7 wherein said images contain hyperlinks to web

pages.

[c9]   9. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of: temporarily displaying images which appear to move across said map.

[c10]   10. The method of claim 9 wherein said images contain hyperlinks to web pages.

[c11]   11. The method of claim 1 wherein said plurality of web site pages associated with said plurality of hyperlink addresses are culturally localized.

[c12]   12. The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of customizing said visual representation to provide a cultural theme, said cultural theme being associated with said plurality of culturally localized web site pages.

[c13]   13. The method of claim 12 further comprising the step of providing a link which, when activated, displays a listing of one or more other portal pages, each of which has a visual representation customized for a different culture '

[c14]   14. A user interface for organizing and displaying a plurality of hyperlink addresses associated with a plurality of corresponding web site pages comprising:

         a visual representation of a map having a plurality of active areas thereon, said active areas representing individual hyperlinks or a plurality of hyperlinks having a common theme, wherein said map is modified to provide information regarding said common theme when a cursor is placed over one of said active areas.

[c15]   15. The user interface of claim 14 wherein said active areas related by a common concept are placed on said map in close proximity to each other.

[c16]   16. The user interface of claim 14 wherein said map represents a village and further wherein said active areas are shown as representations of buildings and other common structures typically found in a village.

[c17]
         17. The user interface of claim 16 further comprising a display of the interior

of a building, which is shown when said active area represented by said building is selected, said display of said interior of a building displaying all hyperlinks having a common theme associated with said active area.

[c18] 18. The user interface of claim 14 further comprising a button which, which selected by a user, will re-display said map, without regard to where said user has navigated.

[c19] 19. The user interface of claim 14 further comprising a navigation bar having a plurality of buttons corresponding to said plurality of active areas on said map.

[c20] 20. The user interface of claim 11 further comprising one or more static images which are temporarily displayed at random locations on said map.

[c21] 21. The user interface of claim 20 wherein said images contain hyperlinks to web pages.

[c22] 22. The user interface of claim 14 further comprising one or more moving images which are temporarily displayed on said map.

[c23] 23. The user interface of claim 22 wherein said images contain hyperlinks to web pages on said Internet.

[c24] 24. The user interface of claim 14 wherein said plurality of web site pages associated with said plurality of hyperlink addresses are culturally localized.

[c25] 25. The method of claim 24 further comprising the step of customizing said visual representation to provide a cultural theme, said cultural theme being associated with said plurality of culturally localized web site pages.

[c26] 26. The method of claim 25 further comprising the step of providing a link which, when activated, displays a listing of one or more other user interfaces, each of which has a visual representation customized for a different culture.

[c27] 27. A method of accessing a plurality of web site pages by collecting,

organizing and visually presenting representations of a plurality of hyperlink addresses associated with said web site pages, said method comprising: displaying a plurality of buildings on a map layout wherein each of said buildings are representative of categories of information items having a common theme;

organizing each of said plurality of buildings into districts, said districts representative of a common concept among said buildings illustrated therein.

[c28]   28. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of:

modifying the appearance of said buildings when a cursor is place thereover.

[c29]   29. The method of claim 27 wherein said modifying step comprises displaying information relating to said common theme.

[c30]   30. The method of claim 27 wherein said buildings represent a plurality of commercial or retail establishments.

[c31]   31. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of displaying a navigation bar.

[c32]   32. The method of claim 31 wherein said navigation bar dynamically changes based on the position and/or interaction of a cursor with respect to said districts.

[c33]   33. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of temporarily displaying static or moving images at random locations on said map.

[c34]   34. The method of claim 33 wherein said images display advertisements for said commercial or retail establishments.

[c35]   35. The method of claim 33 wherein said images contain hyperlinks to said commercial and retail establishments.

[c36]

36. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of providing a

means for a user to return to said map display, without regard to where said user has navigated using said hyperlinks.

[c37]   37. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of displaying said hyperlinks in a textual fashion.

[c38]   38. The method of claim 27 wherein said plurality of web site pages associated with said plurality of hyperlink addresses are culturally localized.

[c39]   39. The method of claim 38 further comprising the step of customizing said map layout to provide a cultural theme, said cultural theme being associated with said plurality of culturally localized web site pages.

[c40]   40. The method of claim 39 further comprising the step of providing a link which, when activated, displays a listing of one or more other map layouts, each of which is customized for a different culture.